

Response to Hurricane Irma: Cuba

Situation Report No. 5. Office of the Resident Coordinator

(12/09/2017)



This report is produced by the Office of the Resident Coordinator. It covers the period from 14:00 hrs. on September 011th to 12:00 hrs. on September 12th. The next report will be issued on or around 13/09.

Highlights

- Hurricane Irma severely impacted the three regions of Cuba. The greatest damage is reported in the central and western provinces.
- Preliminary reports show substantial losses in the following sectors: housing, energy, water and sanitation, agriculture, education, health, telecommunications, and tourism (one of the main sources of income in the country).
- The hurricane has also lead to critical damage to the National Electrical System. Sectorial authorities are prioritizing recovery efforts and seeking alternatives for the gradual restoration of service. A significant part of the population continues to be affected by the lack of electrical services.
- Damage to the electrical system also prevent the regular pumping of water to a large portion of the population. Havana, with 2.2 million residents, is one the most affected territories.
- The National Council and the Provincial and National Councils of Civil Defense remain activated, closely following the recovery work and the assessment of damages caused by Irma.



Photo: Periódico Granma



Photo: Revista Bohemia



Photo: Periódico Granma

*Note: All the information in this report has been taken from Cuban official media (TV, radio, and press) and statements from Cuban authorities. Sources: Newspapers Periódicos Granma, Juventud Rebelde, Vanguardia, Invasor, Adelante, Periódico 26, Ahora, Sierra Maestra y Venceremos. Radio: Radio Habana Cuba, Radio Angulo, Radio Mambí; Press agencies: Prensa Latina (PL) y Agencia Cubana de Noticias (ACN); Web sites: Cubadebate. Supplementary data has been taken from the National Statistics Office website.

Situation overview

Unlike Hurricane Sandy (2012) and Hurricane Mathew (2016), whose impacts were concentrated in the Eastern Region of Cuba, Hurricane Irma punished almost all of Cuba, with reports of some type of impact in about 90% of the country. Damage is greater in the center and western provinces, however, nowhere escaped the destruction of Hurricane Irma.

The extensive coverage of the damage complicates the recovery process, which is already being undertaken by authorities. Most of the working teams involved in the recovery process in each territory are working in their respective provinces before supporting other affected areas.

The lack of electricity and regular supply of water to the population is mainly reported in the central and western territories. There are some territories that have remained without electricity for five days. Yuri Camilo Viamontes Lazo, Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines, explained that Hurricane Irma caused significant damage in 100% of the thermoelectric plants located along the northern coast of the country and, to a lesser extent, in two plants along the southern coast. The most serious situation is reported in the Central Region of the Island.

Inés María Chapman, President of the National Institute of Hydraulic Resources, pointed out that the most severe damage to the public water supply is reported from the province of Las Tunas to Havana. In the west, the greatest impact is concentrated in Havana.

Electricity Union work teams from Santiago de Cuba, Granma, Artemisa and Pinar del Río Provinces, which are less affected, are enlisted to support recovery efforts in the most affected provinces throughout the rest of the country.

Humanitarian Response

National authorities

The National Defense Council for Disaster Reduction met this Monday. They continue to assess the severe damage caused by the impact of Hurricane Irma on most of the island's territory and set priorities for the Hurricane Recovery Phase in 13 out of the 15 provinces in the country. The defined priorities are to rehabilitate electrical services, to restore the regular supply of water to the population, and to restart the Education Sector.

The meeting was attended by Esteban Lazo, President of the National Assembly of People's Power, Ramiro Valdés; Vice-President of the Councils of State and Ministers; senior officials of the Ministries of Energy and Mines and Education; the Director of the Electricity Union of Cuba; the National Institute of Hydraulic Resources; and representatives of the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

The day before, the First Vice President of Cuba, Miguel Diaz-Canel, attended a meeting with the Provincial Defense Council of Havana. The capital, with more than 2.2 million inhabitants, has been severely affected by the force of the wind and coastal flooding along the northern coast of the city.

The General of the Division and Head of the Western Army, Onelio Aguilera Bermúdez, stated that recovery works along the northern coast of Cuba's capital will be supported with the necessary work force and equipment. Authorities from the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces visited territories affected by Hurricane Irma, from the eastern province of Camagüey to the central province of Villa Clara.

The Provincial Defense Councils of the territories under the Hurricane Recovery Phase have travelled around the affected areas. They are closely following sectoral damage, recovery work and the attention to populations that still remain evacuated.

A significant number of people remain evacuated as a result of the serious damage caused by Hurricane Irma in their communities. In many cases, they do not have a habitable home to return.

Currently, the available data for evacuated populations by territory is as follows:

Province	Number of people evacuated (11/09/2017)	Number of people evacuated (Update: 09/12/17)
Guantánamo	136,700	177 (122 in family homes and 55 in evacuation centers)
Santiago de Cuba	145,000	Returning to homes
Granma	66,200	740 in evacuation centers
Holguín	12,800	Update not available
Las Tunas	150,00	
Camagüey	140,000	
Ciego de Ávila	102,374	
Sancti Spíritus	10,000	Mostly returning to homes
Villa Clara	200,036	Update not available
Cienfuegos	22,700	
Matanzas	62,750	62,000
Mayabeque	17,000	Returning to homes
La Habana	78.960	Update not available
Artemisa	22,123	Returning to homes

Source: Data information published in national and local media

Sectors



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Damage:

- In most parts of Havana, power outages continue to affect water pumping and supply.
- Coastal inundation, damage to sanitation facilities, and the flooding of streams and rivers have caused the contamination of cisterns throughout the northern cost of affected municipalities.

Response:

- The National Defense Council for Disaster Reduction has declared restoring the regular water supply to the population a priority.
- As power is restored in the eastern provinces, the water supply is being re-introduced progressively.
- In provinces affected by power outages, the population's needs in terms of water are being met through pipes and water tanks.
- The transfer of resources to the Central Region of the country has been initiated, with seven pipes and several Cuban Civil Defense Brigades currently at the region's disposal to ensure the water supply.
- In less than 72 hours, most of the water supply problems in the capital will likely be resolved, said Inés María Chapman, President of the National Institute of Hydraulic Resources.
- In Ciego de Avila, electric power has been restored, which facilitates the distribution of water through hydraulic networks.
- Intensive recovery efforts are underway by Cuban Civil Defense Brigades, with the support of the population, to remove fallen trees, clean sewers and drainage systems, and collect solid waste.
- To ensure the water supply, generators are being used to avoid any kind of disruption and respond to power outages.

UNICEF

- UNICEF is coordinating the purchase of 3 million chlorine tablets to ensure safe water.

- Proposals are also being developed to ensure the acquisition of 10-liter tanks to store safe water, to purchase hygiene kits, and to distribute communication materials on sanitation and hygiene best practices.

PAHO/WHO

- PAHO/WHO is estimating needs in terms of the quantity of analysis kits required to ensure water quality.



Food Security and Nutrition

Damage:

- Over 5,000 hectares of tubers, vegetables and fruits have been reported as damaged, of which more than 80% are varieties of plantains, banana and bluggoe banana (“burro”). Other crops, such as corn, rice, sugarcane and coffee, have also been affected.
- Preliminary reports have demonstrated a loss of more than 71,000 birds, especially in Camagüey, Villa Clara, Cienfuegos, Ciego de Ávila and Matanzas Provinces.
- Impacts on food production and processing capacities were noted in greenhouses, seed and flower beds, roofs of poultry farms and shelters, irrigation systems, feed mills, dairy and breeding centers, sugar mills, rice mills, and the food processing industry.
- Disruptions have been registered in the sale of and access to food, in areas such as warehouses, bakeries, trading points and cafeterias, as well as in warehouses that stored tons of commodities.

**+ 5,000
hectares**
of tubers, vegetables
and fruits affected

Response:

- Measures are being taken to recover sown plantain crops and make them produce within six months. Drainage of flooded fields has started. Assistance is being given in the form of firewood and coal to 441 collective food centers in the most severely affected areas. In addition, organic material has been gathered to protect short-cycle crops, recover vegetable gardens and organic gardens (organopónicos) associated with the urban agriculture program, and guarantee the harvest of mature coffee, as well as coffee grains razed to the ground.
- The production of milk, eggs and meat has been reorganized in Artemisa, Mayabeque, Matanzas, Camagüey, Ciego de Ávila and Villa Clara Provinces.
- To guarantee the recovery of the different segments of the agricultural sector, 500 trucks and dozens of gathering machines have been made available.

FAO:

- FAO is closely observing developments in order to stay up-to-date with the needs of national counterparts and to be able to provide a rapid and efficient response for the rehabilitation of food production in the most affected sectors. Preliminary indications of immediate needs are being received.
- Direct communications with sectoral authorities are being maintained to be able to determine concrete needs as soon as possible.
- Regional and central offices are prepared for assistance. Personnel are being mobilized to support coordination of assistance.

WFP:

- WFP has a contingency stock of 1,600 tons of food pre-positioned in Havana, Cienfuegos and Santiago de Cuba Provinces to support immediate assistance to around 275,000 people for one month in areas affected by Hurricane Irma. Given the extent of the damage, this stock is not sufficient to cover the needs of the affected populations. Resources are being mobilized to purchase additional food.
- Possible response scenarios and prioritization exercises are being developed to define the assistance of WFP, together with the Government of Cuba, in relation to food rations and the prioritization of population groups and times, considering the most affected areas.
- The WFP Headquarters and regional office are providing support to ensure timely assistance.



Infrastructures and Basic Services Rehabilitation

Damage:

HOUSEHOLD

Significant damage to housing have been observed in addition to production and service enterprises, schools and public premises as a result of strong wind.

Province	Household	Roof	Municipalities
Matanzas			Cárdenas, Martí y Matanzas
Villa Clara			Corralillo, Quemado de Güines, Sagua la Grande, Encrucijada, Camajuaní, Remedios and Caibarién. Placetras: 291 homes damaged and 20 destroyed Encrucijada: 70% of housing has been damaged
Sancti Spíritus	4,000 damaged, 422 destroyed		Impacts are reported in eight municipalities, with the most severe damage in Yaguajay and Sancti Spíritus.
Ciego de Ávila			Bolivia: 95% de las viviendas dañadas
Camagüey	4,000 damaged, 1,100 destroyed, and 300 partially destroyed	2,500 roofs lost	Esmeralda, Sierra de Cubitas and Nuevitas
Las Tunas	800 damaged (46 destroyed and 114 partially destroyed)	75 ceilings completely lost and 585 partially lost	
Holguín	4,006 damaged (with 174 destroyed)		Gibara, Antilla, Holguín and Banes
Guantánamo	875 damaged, 73 destroyed		Baracoa, Maisí, San Antonio del Sur, Yateras and Caimanera
province	Household	roof	municipalities
Holguín	4,006 houses affected (174 has been colapsed)		Gibara, Antilla, Holguín y Banes
Camagüey	3,000 houses damaged		Esmeralda y Nuevitas
Las Tunas	800 affected (46 has been colapsed and 114 parcialy damaged)	75 techos perdidos completamente y 585 solo de forma parcial	

There is also significant damage to the electric service, communications systems and the public water supply. Restoration of these services is a priority for Cuban authorities.

ELECTRICITY

Impacts to the National Electroenergetic System have caused a total paralysis of electricity generation. For the first time in history, electricity generation fell to zero. Of the country's eight thermoelectric power plants, including the Tallapiedra Plant in Havana, six are located on the northern coast, the area most affected by Hurricane Irma.

Progress is being made in the restoration of the electric system and the revitalization of services to the population and other entities. The recovery and total rehabilitation time cannot yet be estimated.

Electrical, construction and communal service brigades across the country are supporting recovery.

COMMUNICATION

Damage is reported in the networks of 34 municipalities. In total, there are 100,284 impacts to telephone and data, of them 67,390 to the fixed basic telephone service, 26,520 to alternative fixed telephone service, 3,111 to the public telephone service, 1,472 to service centers, and 1,791 to transmission and data centers.

Matanzas

- Sixteen thousand residential area telephone services were affected. Mobile telephone services are guaranteed.

Response:**UNDP**

- UNDP has made available US \$84,050 of regular resources for the acquisition of 2,470 mattresses for affected families.
- The 9,823 roofing sheets, pre-positioned by UNDP, are being distributed gradually, according to the indications of the national authorities. These tarpaulins allow the creation of temporary facilities for the affected population.
- UNDP has activated its emergency response mechanism and made available US \$500,000 for early recovery and US \$100,000 for coordination in an initial response phase. Two UNDP experts arrive today to support the UNDP Office in response.
- These resources are in addition to those already made available from the reprogramming of the projects in implementation. Support will be provided to the mobilization of additional resources for the area of housing and early recovery.
- The Housing and Early Recovery Sector, led by UNDP with the participation of IOM, UN Habitat and UNESCO, continues to prepare information on basic non-food needs for immediate response, including: plastic roofing sheets, mattresses, kitchen kits, sheets, zinc sheets for roofs, and tools. These actions will be coordinated with those of the United Nations agencies that work in the water and sanitation, food security and health sectors.



Health

Damages:**Overview of health services in most affected provinces:**

Most affected Provinces/ Municipalities	Hospitals	Polyclinics	FDO	Maternity Care Centers	Nursing Homes	Senior Care Centers	Pop. 60 & up		Pop. under age 5	
							M	F	M	F
Camaguey (Nuevitás, Minas, Sierra de Cubitas, Esmeralda)	13 (2)	31 (6)	657 (143)	7 (0)	14 (4)	24 (4)	72,869 (13,730)	79.429 (13.834)	21,713 (4,141)	20,335 (3,881)
Ciego Avila (Bolivia, Morón, Chambas)	3 (1)	19 (6)	392 (141)	10 (1)	8 (2)	16 (3)	39,025 (11,028)	41.651 (11.881)	12,523 (3,481)	11,743 (3,170)
S.Spiritus (Yaguajay)	8 (1)	23 (4)	448 (76)	5 (1)	8 (2)	9 (nd)	47,508 (6,533)	50.211 (6.509)	12,753 (1,314)	12,026 (1,211)
V.Clara (Caibarien, Camajuani, Encrucijada, Sagua, Quemado, Corralillo)	13 (3)	37 (11)	837 (250)	8 (1)	16 (5)	26 (5)	86,521 (25,874)	95.861 (27.929)	20,090 (5,810)	18,541 (5,310)
La Habana (preliminary: Plaza, Playa, Centro Habana, Habana Vieja, Cerro, 10 de octubre, Boyeros)	34	82	2.022	19	33	39	197,168 (106,752)	260.774 (143.889)	52,240 (23,765)	49,297 (22,667)

FDO: Family Doctor's Office

M: Male

F: Female

Havana:

- “Hermanos Ameijeiras” national reference Hospital in Havana has been strongly lashed by Hurricane Irma and was entirely evacuated, causing impacts to services of nuclear medicine, radiotherapy, clinical laboratory, imaging and outpatient surgery.
- Effects were also reported in centers of the three levels of medical care, as well as in educational institutions, mainly to light roofs, ceilings, glassware and windows, as well as perimeter fences due to the falling of trees, contamination of the cisterns in the facilities that suffered the coastal floods, and electrical damages.
- “Mártires del Corynthia” Teaching Polyclinic reports water pollution problems and electric system damage.
- “América Arias” Maternal Hospital reports impacts to the water cistern.
- “Faustino Pérez” Hospital in Matanzas reports damage to generators.

Response:

- The direct implication of the population has been requested in order to strictly comply with all hygienic-sanitary measures. Epidemiological actions to prevent outbreaks of infectious diseases have already been undertaken across the country.
- The Minister of Public Health confirmed the availability of sodium hypochlorite with coverage greater than 18 days in the provinces and 10 days in the capital city. Measures were taken in evacuation and food processing centers to keep the epidemiological situation under control. Messages are being sent to the population to exercise extreme safety measures, such as boiling water and avoiding consuming perishable foods that have may have gone bad.

Identified needs:

- Information has been received from Ministry of Public Health on immediate response needs. These include medicines such as doxycycline, water treatment tablets, tests to determine chlorine level, calcium hypochlorite for disinfection, and rapid tests for the determination of cholera, malaria and E. Coli.
- In addition, it is very necessary to acquire the supplies for protection against vector-borne diseases, impregnated mosquito nets and Temephos at 1%.
- It is also a priority to re-establish water tanks and generators at primary health care facilities.

PAHO/WHO:

- PAHO/WHO is working on estimating needs, in close coordination with health authorities, according to different scenarios to ensure the provision of essential health services to save lives, the availability of drinking water in the affected health institutions, and other actions aimed at saving lives.

UNFPA

- With funding from UNFPA, 1,000 hygiene kits for pregnant women will be purchased. Another 900 hygiene kits for pregnant women are already pre-positioned in Panama and in the process of being shipped to Cuba.
- In addition, the request for contraceptive kits and support to births and obstetric surgeries has been initiated for health institutions and the affected population in 14 of the municipalities most affected by Hurricane Irma.

**Education****Damages:**

- The Ministry of Education has not fixed an official date to resume classes, taking into account that each province has been affected differently. However, it is estimated that schools across the country will reopen their doors throughout the week.
- More than 1,400 educational facilities have been affected, most of them located in Havana, Villa Clara, Matanzas, Camagüey and Ciego de Avila Provinces. The latter has more than 50% of its facilities damaged.
- Although only two collapses are reported in the Holguín Province, partial damage to roofs and windows, contaminated cisterns, fallen trees, and damaged perimeter fences and walls have been reported.

+ 1,400
schools affected

LA HABANA

- There are around 500 schools affected in the capital.

CAMAGÜEY

- Several educational centers have been affected, especially their roofing, carpentry and waterproofing, which resulted in leaks and some structural damage.
- In the municipality of Esmeralda, 30 schools have been damaged.
- One of the priorities is to resume classes as soon as possible and therefore find alternative solutions for the 14,400 people who are in evacuation centers, especially those hosted in educational institutions.

ARTEMISA

- Eighteen schools were affected, mainly in Bahía Honda, Mariel and Candelaria, with three centers affected in each municipality. The most damaged institutions are José Ramón López Primary School, Baile Grito Mixed Center, the vocational school in Bahía Honda, and the Alegría de Vivir and Girón Victoria Daycare Centers in Mariel. In these particular cases, classes will take place in other premises not affected by the hurricane.

CIEGO DE AVILA

- One hundred and seventy-six educational centers were affected, with the most significant damage reported to roofs and carpentry. In the municipality of Bolivia, approximately 50% of schools exhibit roof damage.
- Currently, efforts are geared towards resuming all classes across the province on Wednesday, 13 September.
- The possibility of having boarding school students return to the different centers is being evaluated based on the the water supply and electricity conditions.

LAS TUNAS

- Seventy-six schools were affected, mainly in the north of the territory.
- Only José López Trevill Primary School, located in La Boca Beach, and Roberto Proenza from the Dumañecos community in Manatí, will not resume classes in their own facilities. The first will do so in neighboring premises and the second in family homes.

HOLGUIN

- Damage has been reported in 982 government institutions, including schools.

GUANTANAMO

- Partial damage has been reported in 17 schools, which are already undergoing repairs.

Response:

- Since the recovery phase was announced, extensive sanitation work is being carried out in all schools across the country with the help of teachers to create the best conditions possible for the timely return of students.
- Among the measures taken to facilitate the return of students to learning spaces are: 1) the return of resources/materials that were evacuated to be preserved; 2) the re-organization of the educational program to propose complementary educational activities and specific work sessions; and 3) the identification of facilities (i.e. family homes or schools) that can host the students from the 48 institutions that reported damage.
- Thousands of boarding school students have been transferred to their schools, based on a transportation program announced through the media.

UNICEF

- Once the damage is quantified, UNICEF will support the timely return of children and adolescents to safe and protective learning spaces in the most affected municipalities. As part of its response, UNICEF foresees the distribution of Early Childhood Development (ECD) kits, School-in-a-Box kits and recreational kits as well as early childhood interventions.

UNESCO

- UNESCO is working to identify possible damage in schools in affected municipalities to support the rehabilitation of educational centers and to guarantee safe learning spaces.
- UNESCO will assess the extent of the damage to develop pedagogical strategies in order to overcome post-disaster stress in students and teachers.

**Damage:**

- According to estimates, strong winds and coastal inundation affected warehouse viability and infrastructure in the most affected provinces (vital for the transportation and storage of food and other key products). Authorities are currently assessing the damage.

Response/Preparatory measures:

- From 12 September, International Airport José Martí in Havana will be reopened. Regular inland transport by buses in Havana and maritime transportation between the ports of Nueva Gerona, Batabanó y Cayo Largo del Sur will be also re-established.

WFP:

- In coordination with the Government, WFP is relocating five of the nine mobile storage units (MSUs) donated for Hurricane Matthew response in Guantanamo Province. The MSUs will be loaned and dispatched to Ciego de Avila and Villa Clara Provinces and will support local authorities to protect the food slated for the population.
- Following the impact of Hurricane Irma, WFP is monitoring the damage due to wind, rain and storm surge on infrastructure for the storage, preparation and distribution of food to vulnerable groups, taking into account lessons learned from previous experience.
- WFP is in constant contact with its headquarters and regional bureau to ensure timely assistance according to national needs. Given the extent of the damage, WFP needs to mobilize additional funding to purchase other MSUs.

General Coordination

The UN Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) continues to analyze the damage caused by Hurricane Irma and define the most affected areas. As part of the response plan, it was agreed to seek an immediate application to the Emergency Cash Grant Funds from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). In addition, the UN Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) is working on a first draft of the application to the Central Emergency Action Fund (CERF), a humanitarian fund established by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

UNETT is also working on a draft of the Plan of Action of the United Nations System (UNS) in response to Hurricane Irma.

For further information, please contact:

Cristian Morales, Resident Coordinator a.i., UN System in Cuba, moralesc@paho.org, Tel: +53 7 204 1492

Liudmila Curbelo, Coordination Officer, UN System in Cuba, liudmila.curbelo@one.un.org, Tel: +53 7 204 1513

For further information, please visit: www.unocha.org, www.reliefweb.int, www.redhum.org, www.onu.org.cu.

For further information, please visit:

Instituto de Meteorología de Cuba: <http://www.met.inf.cu>

Granma: <http://www.granma.cu>

Juventud Rebelde: <http://www.juventudrebelde.cu/>

Agencia Cubana de Noticias: <http://www.acn.cu/>

Cubadebate: <http://www.cubadebate.cu>

To be added to or removed from the distribution list, please write to: liudmila.curbelo@one.un.org

*Note: All the information in this report has been taken from Cuban official media (TV, radio, and press) and statements from Cuban authorities. Sources: Newspapers Periódicos Granma, Juventud Rebelde, Vanguardia, Invasor, Adelante, Periódico 26, Ahora, Sierra Maestra y Venceremos. Radio: Radio Habana Cuba, Radio Angulo, Radio Mambí; Press agencies: Prensa Latina (PL) y Agencia Cubana de Noticias (ACN); Web sites: Cubadebate. Supplementary data has been taken from the National Statistics Office website.